

Hitting the Road

Hey boys and girls, it's your lucky day! This here's *The Hunt Begins*, a sort of jumpstart kit for the *Supernatural RPG*. It's got rules anybody can understand, some ready-to-go characters, and an adventure to get you started. There's even some ideas for creating your own tales of terror. Just remember that all this is just for starters. The main course is served up in the *Supernatural Role Playing Game Corebook*. That book's got the skinny on whipping up (and sometimes whipping on) hunters, decking 'em out with the tools of the trade, and keeping 'em alive long enough to actually do some good. If it's not in your local gaming store just yet, it will be soon. Ask for it!

Playing the Supernatural RPG

Unless you've been hiding from the things in your basement (not so crazy an idea sometimes), you've probably run across the show *Supernatural* on the CW network—creatures stalk the living in small towns, restless spirits haunt broken and sad cemeteries, old campfire horror stories are a whole lot less fun than when you were a kid. In this game, the bad stuff is real, and someone's gotta bury 'em for good. The *Supernatural RPG* is your way into this world, but it's up to you how you go about grabbing it. You can give Sam and Dean Winchester a shot, getting neck-deep in the struggles they've had for the past four years. You could gather up a new group of hunters and see just how tough *they* are. Hell, you could do a bit of both. Your hunters could roam around the country, explore dark and dank castles in Europe, or even put down roots in a town all full up of dark secrets. Your story and your survival are all up to you.

The Hunt Begins lays out a beginning adventure that shows you what's what in the game—it's a spanking new story you've not seen or heard yet. And because we're just giving you a taste of the game here, we're not laying out the full rules treatment. Trust us on this: there's only so much you need to know right now. To get started, give the sections dealing with the game rules and style of play a read through, then gather your compadres. Let your inner Wes Craven run wild and wing it when something comes up that just isn't covered by the rules (that happens all the time, in both RPGs and hunting). This here's a game, not the Kabbalah—just make sure you and the gang's having a good time!

Players and Characters

A *Supernatural RPG* session shines the spotlight on a group of hunters—characters run by (and usually dreamed up) by the players. Sometimes these sorry suckers are

“professionals,” like Sam and Dean; sometimes they're just normal folks in way over their heads. The players flesh out the hunters, give them voices, and decide their actions when the fit hits the shan.

As a player, your job is to really suss out your character. In time, you'll want to nail down your character's look, back story, ambitions, hatreds, quirks ... hell, he's probably got some dysfunctions somewhere in there too. The rules just lay out a framework. Players and hunters bring it all to life.

Some folks like to sweat lots of character details from the start. Others start with some game stats and a few notes, then let the hunter come together over time. Either way, as the sessions go by, your hunter deals with the other player's hunters, and struggles to survive in the big ol' horrifying world, everybody discovers more about him.

The world of *Supernatural* is painful and dangerous—evil is constantly shoving through the door and leaving nasty blood tracks on the carpet. Some characters kick butt, some get buried, and others go off the deep end. Watching it all play out is what it's all about.

The Game Master

Whenever the gang hits the road, somebody has to drive. One of you lucky stiffs gets to be the **Game Master**. This guy lays down the basics of the story, describes the good and the bad of the world to the players, and gets under the skin (sometimes literally) of all the **supporting characters**—the victims, the bystanders, and whatever ghosts, creatures, or other baddies the hunters run across. The Game Master offers up the challenges, and then rejiggers the tale depending on how the hunters screw things up ... or how they lay the smack down. The Game Master's also the one who applies the game rules when they're needed.

The Game Master should do a bit of prep before each session. Fortunately, we've done most of the cramming for you already in this kit. You should know the storyline (that's where the reading-this-package part comes in). You might want to scribble up pages of notes, giving John Winchester a run for his money. Or you might just want to jot down a few ideas and wing it. Just remember that no matter how prepared you think you are, the players are always going to fire a curve ball or two at you. That's cool though; not knowing exactly where a session will go is what makes role playing games rock. A good Game Master is ready to improvise at a moment's notice—just make sure everyone's enjoying themselves.

The *Supernatural RPG* rules have their own name—the Cortex System. This system puts a lot of power (in terms of storytelling and how the game plays) in the Game Master's hands. Don't abuse it. Try to be fair and always remember that the players are supposed to be the heroes. You may be the head honcho director, but the players are the badass stars, and everyone's a co-writer.

The Rules and the Story

No game system covers every conceivable situation, especially in a world jam packed with ghosts, evil creatures, dark ritual magic, and even crazier stuff. The Cortex System helps the players spin a sweet story but it isn't supposed to be the story itself. When the rules don't cover something, the Game Master and players should make it up and move on. The major rule in the *Supernatural RPG* is simple: *the story comes first*. Unless the story requires the Game Master to royally hose the players, all Game Master rulings should be fair. When in doubt, give the players and their characters the edge, and let them steer for a while until the story needs the Game Master to jump back in the driver's seat.

The rules below are pretty simply and very flexible. The basic mechanics are a snap to remember, so you don't spend time flipping through pages when you should be playing. The Game Master is the only one who needs to wade through all the game rules, at least once. Players should understand the basics, but they ought be paying more attention to their characters and the story—not obsessing over dice and numbers.

What You Need

To play out the terrible tale in this kit, you need:

- Pencils and copies of the character sheets found later on.
- Funky dice of different shapes: two-sided (d2), four-sided (d4), six-sided (d6), eight-sided (d8), ten-sided (d10), and twelve-sided (d12). These dice are available at most hobby and game stores. If need be, coins can be used for d2s, or you can modify blank dice by writing 1 on half the sides and 2 on the other half.
- A group of friends as twisted as you are. The kit assumes four players and one Game Master. (The full *Supernatural Role Playing Game Corebook* allows any number of players.)
- A safe house where you can relax and play comfortably, preferably with few distractions and even less evil beasties.

Game Rules

It's time to look under the hood and see just how the Cortex System runs. We cover what makes up characters, how they go about doing stuff (both simple and complex), what happens when they really screw things up (called **botching**), and how to mess up the critters when the shooting starts.

Characters

Characters, whether run by the players or the Game Master, are made up of three parts: Attributes, Skills, and Traits. **Attributes** are raw potential. (You got smarts? Brawn? Mad reflexes?) **Skills** are what you know, whether learned at a fancy pants college or from the school of hard knocks. (Can you pick a lock? Cock a shotgun one-handed? Recite a Latin exorcism ritual from memory?) **Traits** pretty much handle everything else—personality, reputation, special talents, dark secrets, and much more. (Are you afraid of clowns? Movie-star hot? Prone to mind-bending visions that come true more often than not?) Then there are a few derived attributes, such as **Initiative** (how fast do you react?) and **Life Points** (how much punishment can you take?). These are explained in the combat section.

Later on, you'll find four ready-to-play characters. Just grab 'em and get started playing. The full *Supernatural RPG* rulebook presents complete character creation rules, allowing you to create a hunter entirely from scratch.

Attributes

A Cortex System character has six Attributes: Agility, Strength, Vitality, Alertness, Intelligence, and Willpower. Your Attributes are rated by dice. Any die is possible, but an Attribute of d2 is pretty pathetic. A d6 is strictly average—nothing to write home about. Greater numbers get you noticed if you show off. A d12 is as high as you're likely to meet. Those suckers are limited to professional bodybuilders (Strength d12), champion gymnasts (Agility d12), and the like.

Agility covers physical quickness, dexterity, hand-eye coordination, and sense of balance. A character with high Agility kicks ass in actions involving movement, aiming, and reflexes.

Strength is physical prowess. A character with high Strength dominates in hand-to-hand combat, presses and carries heavy loads, and excels in certain athletic contests.

Vitality measures health and endurance. High Vitality characters are tough sons of bitches, resistant to disease and toxins, and able to go longer without food or rest.

STEPS

Dice in the *Supernatural* RPG are arranged in a kind of "ladder." Each die type, from two-sided (d2) up through twelve-sided (d12), represents a "step" on this ladder. Higher steps usually make for greater ability, skill, damage, etc. A d6 is better than a d4; a d8 rocks more than a d6. This ladder can even extend above d12—at that point, a second die is added, making the next step d12+d2. The first eight steps are d2 • d4 • d6 • d8 • d10 • d12 • d12+d2 • d12+d4. Now, this could go on forever if you keep adding dice, but it's damn rare for anything or anyone to begin with a rating higher than d12.

Changes to rolls that make tasks harder or easier are called step modifiers. The modifiers move the die type up the ladder if they are bonuses, and down the ladder if they are penalties. For example, a -1 step penalty turns a d6 into a d4, a +2 step modifier jacks a d6 up to a d10, and so on. A die can be reduced below d2, making it go poof (d0). Good news is, at that point, any further penalty is ignored.

Alertness covers awareness—both the sharpness of a character's senses and how well he keeps an eye (or ear) out. A character with high Alertness is more likely to see through a ruse.

Intelligence is brainpower, the ability to outsmart and outthink the bad guys. Intelligence solves complicated problems and gets accurate conclusions without all the facts.

Willpower is drive and strength of personality. High Willpower folks get others to go along with their off-the-deep-end ideas, hold out against interrogation and intimidation, and don't mess their pants when the uglies show.

Skills

So we know you got potential, but if you don't tap it, you're not gonna impress anyone. Doing stuff usually involves Skills. Doesn't matter if it was learned in school, out on the streets, or reading books. Skill dice show what you've mastered and what you know just enough about to be dangerous. Sam can research like no tomorrow, both in libraries and online. Dean can jack a car and work a con. Both are solid with guns, hand-to-hand combat, and picking locks.

With Skills, like Attributes, the bigger the die, the better. A d2 is one step above a complete ignoramus. A d6 shows basic competence, but don't get cocky. Anything higher is relatively rare, and means serious know-how.

General Skills are the broad view. The Guns Skill covers shooting of all types—pistol, rifle, and shotgun, whatever. Athletics includes dodging, swimming, running, etc. General Skills can only be raised to d6. **Specialty Skills** get hard-core in one area. Pistol, Rifle, and Shotgun are all specialties of the wider Guns skill. Specialties start at d8, but the sky's the limit—anything d12 or higher is mastery.

Some Skills are easy enough that any idiot can use 'em, even if the idiot doesn't have a rating in the Skill. You don't have to be a marksman to pull a trigger, nor go to culinary school to live off mac & cheese. Other actions aren't so forgiving. You can't read a Medieval Latin tome if you've never studied the language, and successful open-heart surgery pretty much requires some time at med school.

We aren't going to waste your time listing skills here. Basic descriptions of the important ones are included on each character sheet.

Traits

While it's nice to know your hunter can hit the broad side of a barn with a shotgun, or beat all comers at poker, his Attributes and Skills don't cover it all. Sam and Dean are both damn fine hunters, but nobody would confuse one for the other. One's a hell of a lot taller for one thing. Dean has women on his mind 24-7, and some anger issues. Sam has a talent for getting people to open up to him but is

obsessed with finding the demon that killed his mother and girlfriend. In the *Supernatural* RPG, these qualities are called **Traits**.

Traits come in two varieties: **Assets** help, sometimes a lot; **Complications** make life more interesting, and not in a good way. Each character has at least one trait, but most have a bunch.

Use Assets and Complications to influence the way the game plays out. Some give bonuses or penalties to certain actions; some offer new ways to spend Plot Points (see Story Elements, below); some give you a do-over if you really screwed the pooch. The *Supernatural* RPG Corebook is chock full of bitchin' Traits for making new hunters. The characters in this booklet are stuck with the ones we gave 'em.

Rolling the Dice

So now you know something about the mess of numbers on your character sheet. Great, but what you really want to know is how to shoot rock salt at a ghost or stab a shapeshifter with a silver letter opener, right? When a character tries something that fail—and the outcome *matters* to the story—it's time to roll the bones. So which bones? That depends on your character's Attributes, Skills, and Traits. The Game Master decides which based on what the player describes. The Game Master also has to figure out what the die roll result means to the story, though the player's probably got a pretty good idea most of the time.

Most actions pair one Attribute with one Skill. Plugging a horror with your demon butt-kicking Colt means rolling your Agility Attribute die and your Guns Skill die (or Pistol Specialty if you've got it), and adding the two numbers together. A high total means you hit the black-eyed son of a bitch right between the eyes. A low roll means you nail a corn silo a hundred yards off target.

Standard Actions

Most actions are over and done with (one way or another) in a flash. Hot-wiring a car, kicking down a door, or sneaking past a security guard are all **standard actions**.

Once the Game Master decides which Attribute and Skill are paired for a particular action, the player rolls the dice that correspond to those qualities and adds the results together. If the total is higher than the **Difficulty** set by the Game Master, the hunter aces the attempt. The Difficulty is either a static number based on the situation (see Difficulty Table) or the result of another character's own roll (an **opposed roll**, to use the lingo.)

Actions that don't risk much or don't mean much to the story don't require rolls. The Game Master won't ask for a roll to flip on the light switch, order a beer, or start up the Impala. Finding the light switch in pitch black darkness, noticing that the beer has been spiked with a mickey, or getting the car going when the hounds of Hell are bearing down on you is a whole different thing. Whether or not you roll the bones depends on what's going on.

Which Attribute and Skill go together? The Game Master makes that call. Some combinations are more common than others—Alertness + Perception, Agility + Guns—but nothing's set in stone.

Let's run it down and make sure everyone's on the same page. Dean is beating feet as fast as he can, trying to make it back to his car. A pack of vampires chasing him down are hungry for blood ... his blood. At first he's sprinting through an open clearing, so all he has to do is pump his legs as hard as he can—that means Strength + Athletics/Running. Next he's heading through a patch of trees. That requires some dodging to maintain speed, so the Game Master assigns Agility + Athletics/Running. The car is parked on a dirt road covered in potholes and uneven lumps. The Game Master decides Alertness + Athletics/Running is needed to keep Dean from falling on his face.

Complex Actions

Standard actions are over quickly, but not everything is so short and sweet. What about something more long term—say, fixing a broken-down '67 Chevy Impala? Or mouthing the gobbledygook of a complicated summoning ritual? Running an extensive Internet search? Now, we're talking **complex actions**.

Complex actions use a difficulty scale much like standard actions, but the totals needed are way higher (see Difficulty Table). The targets are Thresholds, not Difficulties. They require more than one roll—success or

Table 1.1 Difficulties

Action	Difficulty	Extraordinary Success
Easy	3	10
Average	7	14
Hard	11	18
Formidable	15	22
Heroic	19	26
Incredible	23	30
Ridiculous	27	34
Impossible	31	38

failure just isn't that quick. The player keeps a running total of the roll results. Each time the dice are tossed, a certain amount of time passes (minutes, hours, possibly even days depending on the action and the Game Master's discretion). Once the Threshold is reached, the action has been completed successfully and everyone knows how much time has gone by. It's not about success or failure, it's about how long it's gonna take you.

Let's get back to specifics. Sam has broken into a murder victim's house, hoping that his computer files and e-mail account help solve the current hunt. Unfortunately, the man was computer savvy and a touch paranoid—everything is protected by security and passwords. Sam is going to have to use his Intelligence + Computers/Hacking skill. The Game Master secretly decides it's going to be Hard (55) and that in an hour the detective in charge of the case is coming back to visit the crime scene. Each roll represents ten minutes of game time. Sam's player rolls the dice and gets an 11—not a bad start. His next roll isn't so great—an 8, making for a total of 19. It ultimately takes three additional rolls to reach 55, meaning that 50 minutes have elapsed. Sam only has ten minutes to search the unlocked computer files before the cops show up!

Botching

When a player rolls dice for an action and all of them come up 1s, that's bad. As in mess-you-up bad. It's called a **botch** and it means something went seriously wrong—your gun jammed, you tripped and hurt yourself, or the tool slipped and smashed the vessel holding the demon at bay. For a standard action, a botch means automatic failure, plus the character can't do anything during the next turn as he gets his head together. For a complex action, botching cancels out all the rolls and means the character must start over ... if time and the situation allow.

The Game Master is free to get downright ugly when imagining just what a botch means. Screw up the characters too bad though, and the story goes right down the drain. That's not fun for anyone. If you're ever at a loss, ask the

player to tell the group how bad things went down. Players can be even meaner to their own hunters than you. That's empowerment, right there.

Combat

Combat is mostly about standard actions, but there're a few twists. Could be a simple barroom brawl or flash-frying a wendigo with a homemade flamethrower. Whatever it is, the Game Master uses of the combat rules to figure how it all goes down.

At first glance, it seems like there's a lot to combat. Once you run through one or two tussles though, things should go pretty smoothly. (At least for the players around the game table. The characters more likely are fighting for their lives!) Just take things one step at a time. As long as you understand the basic rolling mechanics, you'll do fine.

Initiative, Movement, and Action

When fists, bullets, or hellish claws start flying, it's good to have a bit of structure. Combat breaks down into **turns**—each one is about three seconds long. During a turn, all the combatants try to pull off a limited number of actions, usually one or two. After everyone has acted (or been prevented from acting), a new turn begins. This continues until the combat is over—hopefully with all the hunters still in one piece.

Initiative: Every conflict scene begins with an Initiative roll (Agility + Alertness). Tie rolls require Agility die rolls to determine who goes first. Characters act in order of Initiative—higher numbers get to act first, and around and around you go. The kit characters list their Initiative on their character sheets.

Movement: During a turn, a character can both move and take one combat action (attack, dodge, etc.) in whatever order desired. Normal walking moves the character up to 20 feet. Running ups that to 40 feet per turn, but doing so means the hunter can take no other action that turn.

Action: Nonmovement actions can be almost anything that takes roughly a few seconds. You might shoot a gun, throw a punch, dodge an opponent, kick down a door, or run screaming like a little girl (hopefully not too much of that last one). Complex actions during combat are rare, since there's just not enough time for them. Complex actions are their own kind of drama.

Life Points and Damage

The world of *Supernatural* is deadly. Eventually, all characters are going to take a beating ... or a biting, or experience a cold spectral hand around the throat. However it shows up, it's called damage. You've got a number on the character sheet called **Life Points** that measures how much damage you can rack up, and two tracks to record it: the Stun track and the Wound track.

Stun damage is bumps, bruises, scratches, and plain old exhaustion. The sort of stuff that Dean would tell you to "just suck up." Stun goes away quick—one point per hour of light activity, or two points per hour of rest. **Wound** damage is much more serious—bleeding cuts, fractured bones, busted skulls, and worse. Wounds heal at a rate of one point per two days of rest.

When the total damage—regardless of type—goes over the amount of Life Points the hunter has, he falls unconscious. If some of that was Stun, recovering enough Stun will wake him up. If the damage is all Wounds, that boyo is D-E-D, dead.

Most damage happens during fight scenes, but getting hurt can happen any number of ways. Fire, poison, bad driving, and roadhouse chili all rack up damage. Keep track of the type of damage you've taken on your sheet and pray you get some help before you're knocked out or worse.

Attacking and Defending

Not too surprisingly, most of a fight is going to be spent trying to take out the other guy and avoiding getting hurt yourself. An attack is a standard action; the target's defense is the Difficulty. Defense is a character's ability to block, dodge, or otherwise get the hell out of the way. If the attack roll is equal or higher than the defense, the attack succeeds and damage is doled out.

Attacks: It's impossible to list the ways someone or something might attacks a hunter might face, but in the *Supernatural RPG*, certain skills come into play more than others: Guns, Melee Weapons, and Unarmed Combat are the usual suspects. The Game Master assigns the Attribute and Skill pair for the attack action. Strength often pairs with Melee Weapons and Unarmed Combat (though certain maneuvers require Agility); Agility usually makes time with Guns (or Alertness for more carefully aimed attack actions).

A character can generally make one attack action per turn—unless he decides to take an earlier defense action (remember the whole not getting hit thing?), in which case he's lost his attack action for that turn.

Keep in mind that the game system is somewhat abstract. While you're only rolling dice once per combat turn, the character might be doing a bunch of dodging, feinting, swinging, aiming—waiting for that one moment every few seconds when he can take an action that really counts. Be descriptive, keep combat interesting—don't just let it degenerate into a series of boring dice rolls.

Defense: It may be macho as all hell to stand there and take a punch, but given what hunters face on a daily basis, it's the rare fight that's won by out-toughing the bad guys. Getting hurt less than the other guy makes all the difference. Whether it's blocking, dodging, or diving behind cover, you want to avoid the punishment until you're ready to deal out some of your own.

If a character is aware of an attack and has not yet used his action for the turn, he can use an **active defense**. The character uses a Skill to increase the attacker's Difficulty, and hopefully make that sucker miss. If the attacker uses

Melee Weapons or Unarmed Combat, the defender may use a similar Skill to block, paired with either Agility or Strength (Game Master's call). Dodging can be used against any kind of attack, even gunfire, and rolls Agility + Athletics. Just remember when a character performs an active defense he can't attack—he's spent his action for the turn.

If the character is surprised, unconscious, restrained, or—for whatever reason—not moving, the attack Difficulty is automatically considered Easy (3). It's pretty simple to whack someone when they have no means to get out of the way.

If the defender is engaged in combat and moving freely (even if unaware of the attack), but decides not to use his action to defend, he rolls his Agility to generate a Difficulty for attacks against him. This is called **innate defense**. Sometimes this roll is lower than three (the base Difficulty for unmoving targets). That means the moving defender blundered into the direction of an attack. Sucks, but it happens.

Calculating Damage

When the attack lands, damage results. Damage is the difference between the defense Difficulty and the attack roll result.

Attack Roll – Defense Difficulty = Initial Damage

Initial damage is split between Stun and Wounds, favoring Stun. If you got smacked upside the head for five points of damage, you suffer three Stun, two Wounds. Damn.

Weapons cause additional damage. For example, a typical pistol causes d6 Wounds. This is on top of any initial damage caused by the attack roll. Unarmed attacks have a weapon damage of zero (d0)—and *all* damage is Stun (unless a Trait or some other condition causes it to turn into initial damage (split) or Wound damage). Sometimes the additional damage is Basic damage, which means it gets divided into Stun and Wound just like the initial damage does. If this happens, divide it before you add it to the initial Stun and Wound damage.

Plot Points

It's a pretty tough world—step out into the darkness and chances are you get ripped to shreds. But the main characters in the *Supernatural RPG* are special. They stay alive and pull off tricky things even when the odds are stacked against them. So how does Sam avoid a tripwire attached to a bomb that would certainly blow him to bloody chunks? How does Dean find a cement mixer full and ready to go simply by searching the four-block radius around an underground haunt that needs to be sealed *now*? In the *Supernatural RPG*, players can nudge, or even bludgeon, the story to their advantage by using Plot Points.

Every character begins play with six Plot Points, and can never hold more than 12. The Game Master awards more during play for various reasons:

A player does something really cool, comes up with a great idea, or plays his character very well: 1–2 points.

A hunter suffers a setback due to a Complication: 2–3 points.

The group achieves a major goal, completes an adventure, or does something really bitchin': 3–4 points to everyone involved.

Hunters earn Plot Points fairly quickly, or at least they *should*. That's because survival often depends on spending 'em. Plot Points can be spent the following ways:

ADD A BONUS DIE

You can add a die to your roll, but you have to announce it before the dice hit the table. One Plot Point adds a d2; each additional point increases the die by one step (two points adds a d4, three points a d6, and so on). The bonus die is no different than the other dice that make up the roll, so re-rolls due to Traits would apply. **You always get at least as many points as you spend**, so if you spend three points for a d6 and the result for the bonus die roll is a 2, it counts as a 3—unless you botch. If all the dice are 1s, you're screwed. Hey, it's a dark world out there.

IMPROVE THE OUTCOME

You can add Plot Points after you roll the dice. Each Plot Point adds one point to the final total.

STORY ALTERATION

Plot Points let you alter the story in small ways, with the Game Master's approval. Let's say Dean's handcuffed to a chair in the local sheriff's office. Maybe the sheriff leaves some paperwork on the nearby desk, held together with a paperclip. It so happens that Dean's a wiz at picking cuffs with bent paperclips. Such a convenience has a price, and it's paid in Plot Points. One to two points gets something of minor benefit; 11–12 grant something major. There's just a few things to keep in mind. First, the Game Master can completely reject your idea. (Good news is you don't spend any points if he does.) Second, even if the Game Master accepts your points, he is free to monkey with the details.

KEEPING TRACK

It's a good idea to use some kind of tokens for Plot Points, so they can be tossed back and forth without having to write anything down. Poker chips, glass beads, pennies, even empty shell casings (if you got those laying around, we're not asking any questions) all make for great Plot Points. At the end of a game session, the players note on their character sheets what their final Plot Point totals are for the next game.

Short Example of Play

The Winchester brothers are hunting a demon that possesses people and crashes airplanes. It's bent on killing the remaining survivors from a previous crash. The brothers' plan is to exorcise the demon using a ritual from their father's journal. Sam and Dean are now stuck on a flight. They've learned the copilot is possessed, but he's safely behind the locked cockpit door. Everyone on the plane is in real danger unless they can draw the possessed out. They try to convince Amanda, the flight attendant and the demon's primary target, to help out.

Keith is playing Dean; Joe is Sam. Jess is pulling Game Master duty. The scene opens with Sam and Dean heading to the flight attendant's area toward the back of the plane.

Joe (in character): "She's not gonna believe this."

Keith (to Jess): How much time left?

Jess: 12 minutes until you reach the point where all the other planes went down.

Joe: Fantastic ...

Jess: Amanda is working in the back galley and looks up as you step in.

Keith: Does she recognize me? Here's two Plot Points.

Jess: She sure does! "Hey. Flight's not too bumpy for you, I hope."

Keith: "Actually, that's kinda what we need to talk to you about."

Joe: We explain to her about why Flight 2485 crashed, and that the pilot Chuck Lambert died when his plane went down for the same reason.

Keith: And that now we need her help to stop the same thing from happening again.

Jess: Okay, you two have totally freaked Amanda. Her kindly smile evaporates, replaced by a look of confusion and fright. She definitely doesn't want to believe you. Both of you roll Willpower + Influence/Persuasion, if you have it. We'll go with the higher of your rolls.

Rather than making it an opposed roll of some kind and rolling for Amanda, Jess decides it's gonna be pretty tough to pull this off. She goes with making it a FORMIDABLE task to persuade Amanda, which means a Difficulty of 15. Keith and Joe each roll their Attribute and Skill dice. Keith (with Willpower d6 + Influence/Persuasion d8) doesn't do so well, getting a total of 6. Joe, however (with Willpower d6 + Influence d4 and the Sensitive Asset at d2), throws four Plot Points into the mix to get a bonus d8. He rolls very well; his total is a 17.

Jess: You seem to have gotten through to her. She remembers something. "On 2485 ... there was a man ... he had these ... eyes."

Joe: "That's exactly what we're talking about."

Keith: We ask her to bring the copilot back to the galley.

Jess: Amanda's clearly hesitant, but she agrees. She seems to be holding herself together, for now. She leaves, and after a few nerve-wracking minutes she returns with the copilot. He's talking to Amanda.

Keith: The moment he steps through the curtain I'm knocking his ass to the ground and keeping him down.

Joe: And I duct-tape his mouth and his hands.

Deciding that Amanda did her job and that the co-pilot/demon suspects nothing, Jess doesn't ask for an Initiative roll. The copilot is an unmoving, unaware target so his defense is EASY (Difficulty 3). Keith is performing a knockdown grapple and rolls a total of 12 with Agility (d8) + Unarmed Combat/Brawling (d8). The possessed man takes no damage but goes down in a heap with Dean.

Jess: Even held down, he's still squirming around. Joe, you're up. We're gonna roll opposed Agility + Athletics.

Jess and Joe roll the respective Attribute and Skill dice of their characters. Joe gets a 12 with his d8 + d6, two points shy of beating the 13 that Jess rolled for the possessed copilot. Joe decides to go ahead and spend two Plot Points after his roll to reach the 14 he needs to secure the man.

Joe: There goes the last of my Plot Points!

Jess: Amanda's freaking out. She doesn't scream, but she looks like she might soon. "What are you doing?! You said you were going to talk to him."

Keith: "We are going to talk to him."

Joe: I take the holy water we put in the plastic bottle and splash some right on his chest.

This is Sam's second action of the turn, but Jess decides that he can't miss with the water against a held target so no roll is required (any multiple action penalty is meaningless). She also figures that the water causes d4 Basic damage to the possessed man. She rolls a 3 and notes 1 Wound on the copilot. She doesn't mark down any Stun damage because she's already decided that the possessed man is unaffected by Stun. Bad news for the boys!

Jess: The copilot screams—or would have if his mouth wasn't taped shut. His skin burns where the holy water touched it, and it starts to smoke. He thrashes around even harder. Amanda doesn't seem to know how to process what's going on. "What's wrong with him?!"

Joe: "Stay calm! Go outside the curtain—and don't let anyone through!"

Jess: Okay, next turn. Same initiative order: Dean, Sam, then the copilot.

Keith: I get right on top of the guy and hold him down. I punch him in the head for good measure. "Hurry up with the exorcism! I don't know how long I can hold him down."

Maintaining a grapple is not an action so all Dean's attempting here is an unarmed attack. The only target he can attack is the guy he's got grappled, but that's his intention so we're good. Keith rolls a Strength (d8) + Unarmed Combat/Brawling (d8) against an EASY target and gets a 9, so he connects. The copilot's immunity

to Stun would negate any damage caused by a punch normally, so it's a good thing Dean's got the Brawler Asset at d6. Joe rolls a 2 on the d6, adds it to the 6 points of Basic damage he caused by beating the Difficulty by 6, and halves it. That's 4 points of Wound and 4 points of Stun, but only the Wound counts. Total Wound for the co-pilot: 5.

Jess: Dean, you connect with your fist, but even though you hear his jaw crack you can tell this guy isn't slowing down.

Joe: I'll throw some more holy water on him before starting on the ritual.

Jess again allows the water to hit automatically, rolls the damage, gets a 2, adds 1 Wound to the copilot's total, and again ignores the Stun damage. Total Wound so far: 6.

The exorcism ritual is in Latin, so Joe has to roll Sam's Willpower (d6) + Knowledge (d6). Jess explains that it's not something Sam can read out in a single combat turn. She sets it as a complex action with each roll taking up one turn. The Threshold is AVERAGE (a mere 35), but it has to be done twice—once to pull the demon out, and again to send it back to hell. Jess reminds Joe to apply a -1 Skill step as a multiple action penalty (Sam has already tossed holy water this turn).

Joe: Here we go. (Rolls and adds.) 11!

Jess: His eyes turn black—like a shark's. He looks pissed, but he's still held down. I'm going to say that the holy water is enough of a shock to the copilot that he's unable to act this turn. Okay, next turn. Dean's up first again.

Keith: I'm doing all I can to hold the guy down. I'm not going to do anything else so I don't suffer any penalties when opposing this clown's attempt to break free.

Jess: Good thinking. You know how nasty possessed humans are. (Grins malevolently.) Doncha hate demons? Okay, Sam's up. Roll again for the ritual.

Joe (rolls): I rolled an 8. That brings it to 19 ...

Jess: Gettin' there. Dean, the guy's bucking against you something fierce; roll your Strength + Unarmed Combat—Wrestling specialty if you've got it.

Keith: I don't. That's a 9.

Jess (Consulting the possessed's roll): Closer than you would think. The copilot breaks free but only partially, throwing Dean to one side and snapping the duct tape. He tries to shove Sam. Do you break off the ritual to defend yourself?

Joe: No. I just try to step out of the way as best I can.

Joe rolls his innate defense (Agility d8) and gets a 5. The copilot does quite a bit better—Jess gets a total of 12 after rolling Strength + Unarmed Combat, even accounting for the -1 Skill step for his second action that turn (the possessed guy bucked off Dean as his first action). Sam gets slammed back for 7 Stun. Jess makes Joe roll an Average Agility + Athletics to hold onto the journal and holy water bottle. Joe gets a 6, and doesn't have any Plot Points left to use.

Jess: You drop the journal and the water—which spills out. No more help there. New turn.

Joe: Screw the water. I'm getting the journal. Can I keep going?

Jess: Yes, you can keep your old totals as long as you aren't interrupted for too long ... Okay, since everyone's somewhat separated now, I'm going to restart Initiative. Everyone roll!

Jess rolls Alertness + Agility for the copilot, scoring an 8. Joe gets a 13, Keith a 4. Sam acts first.

Joe: I'll help Dean as best I can while still reading. Don't know how much good that'll do, though. (Rolls for the ritual.) 12! I'm up to 31!

Keith: I'm trying to pin him back down!

Jess: Got it. The copilot's using his action to get clear so you guys basically act at the same time. Opposed roll time. Keith, roll Dean's Agility + Unarmed Combat again, but take a +2 Skill step since Sam is helping out.

Keith: Cool! (It's Agility d8 + Unarmed Combat d6, shifted up two steps to d10, and rolls.) How's a 17 grab ya?

Jess (comparing it to her roll of 13): Wow, nice roll. You keep the guy down, but he rips the duct tape off his mouth. He growls at Sam, "I know what happened to your girlfriend. She died screaming."

Keith: Oh, crap.

Joe knows that Sam's horror about his girlfriend's fate is a big deal. He's so obsessed with hunting the monster responsible that it is listed as a Complication.

Jess: Next turn. Sam's up first.

Joe: I freeze ... I'm totally freaked out about this.

Jess: Excellently done. That's a totally realistic way to play Sam's Complication. I'm giving you two Plot Points as an award. Dean, you're up.

Keith: I punch him again! (Keith rolls and hits, but just barely—3 Basic damage means 1 more Wound is applied, for a grand total so far of 7.) I yell for Sam to hold it together.

Jess: The copilot focuses on getting you off him, Dean. (Another opposed roll occurs; Dean takes a -1 step penalty because he punched already this turn. Dean loses badly.) Doesn't look good. Dean is shoved off completely. Back to the top of the order. Sam's up.

Joe: Screw it. I keep reading. (Rolls a 10, which when added to his current total of 31 easily beats the Threshold of 35.) Made the Threshold and then some!

Jess: The copilot opens his mouth impossibly wide and emits a horrible sound. A cloud of black, acrid smoke billows out. It snakes around the galley and slides into a nearby air vent. Before you get a chance to recover, a violent jerk shakes the plane and the whole thing pitches forward. The plane is going into a nosedive!

As oxygen masks drop down and panic grips the passengers, Sam and Dean now must perform the second part of the exorcism ritual or become yet more of the demon's victims ...